

a housing including a peripheral wall surrounding and rising above an array of contact receiving passageways and having a perimeter edge;

a plurality of separate surface mount contacts for connecting said housing to a substrate by a reflow process employing heat; and

areas of reduced rigidity in portions of said peripheral wall of the housing at which stress builds up due to the heat of the reflow process, each of the areas of reduced rigidity comprising portions of removed housing extending substantially perpendicular to a surface of the housing and extending through a distal end of said peripheral wall of the housing from an inner face to an outer face of the peripheral wall;

such that said areas of reduced rigidity contribute to said plurality of separate surface mount contacts better retaining their co-planarity during and after the reflow process.

23. (Newly Added) The electrical connector according to claim 22, wherein the areas of reduced rigidity in the housing are located at positions furthest from a neutral point of the connector.

24. (Newly Added) The electrical connector according to claim 22, wherein each of the areas of reduced rigidity comprises one of a notch and a slot.

25. (Newly Added) The electrical connector according to claim 22, wherein the areas of reduced rigidity are disposed to absorb stress and accommodate warp.

26. (Newly Added) The electrical connector according to claim 22, wherein the housing is made from a dielectric material.

27. (Newly Added) The electrical connector according to claim 22, wherein the plurality of separate surface mount contacts comprise solder balls.

28. (Newly Added) A method of reducing rigidity in a housing of an electrical connector having a plurality of separate surface mount contacts, comprising: